

[Mr. Speaker]

[18th January 1964]

I told him that he should not do so. In this connection I wish to inform the members the scope of discussion on the Governor's Address.

The Governor's address is similar to the President's Address to the Union Parliament and the Queen's Address to the Parliament of the United Kingdom. The Queen's speech in the United Kingdom is a statement of policy framed by the Cabinet and delivered at the beginning of every session. The responsibility for the speech rests wholly with the Cabinet. The Queen's Speech is answered by an humble Address which affords an opportunity for a wide debate. There is a general debate upon the policy of the Government as outlined in the speech and then there is a debate on the amendments moved by the Opposition advocating alternate policies which are expressed in the form of regret for the omission from the speech of the policies advocated. Members while speaking should not use the Queen's name irreverently or to influence debate.

In Canada, which has a parliamentary system of Government, the Prime Minister writes the speech from the Throne for the Governor-General to deliver to the Parliament indicating the chief measures to be considered during the session. Members are allowed much freedom and it is therefore possible to talk about anything under the sun and yet be in order. But even here reference to Governor-General or the Queen in an irreverent way or to influence the debate is not allowed.

Similarly the Address of the President of India to the Union Parliament is a statement of policy of the Government of India. A member could criticise the speech. In the Lok Sabha in 1956 a member said that the Address by the President looks like a third class report by an under-Secretary or by a bureaucrat. Objection was taken that the member was making disparaging remarks about the statement of the Head of the State. But the Chair ruled that the President is only a mouthpiece of the Government and therefore, a member has a right to say that the Address is not what he expected it to be. Again in 1960, when there was a criticism of the President, the Prime Minister observed as follows:—

“ The President's Address is a statement of policy of the Government. It should be remembered, it is the Government that is responsible for it, and it is not right or proper for our respected President's name to be brought in debates like this. If the President's Address has anything wrong in it or objectionable in it, it is the Government to blame, not the President, and it is open to the Hon. members to criticise or condemn Government because there is some such statement in it which they disapprove of.”

The Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure also provide that there should not be any reflection on the conduct of persons in high authority and that the President's name should not be used to influence the debate.